

WHAT IS THE DSMP?

The Deployment Stress Management Program (DSMP), located within the Office of Medical Services, was developed to assist State Department and USAID personnel in route to or returning from High Threat Posts.

DSMP provides prevention, intervention, assessment, treatment, counseling, educational, and referral services throughout the deployment cycle from pre-deployment through reintegration. DSMP focuses on building resilience, reducing stress associated with deployments and decreasing the stigma associated with seeking mental health care when the need arises.

Developing resilience, prior to deployment, is the primary preventive thrust of DSMP. Resilience is the ability to cope with stress, catastrophe, adversity and returning to the previous state of normal functioning without showing negative psychological effects.

Treatment for psychological injuries is most effective if started early. Seeking help is a sign of responsibility. Recognizing the need for help is an indicator of maturity and professionalism. Talking to someone can make all the difference in the world and does not pose a threat to your security clearance.

The DSMP staff is knowledgeable about how deployments can impact families and therefore proactively provide services to improve the overall psychological health and well-being.

The DSMP staff coordinates with the Family Liaison Office, the Foreign Service Institute, the Diplomatic Security Training Center, and the Employee Assistance Program in supporting individuals and families throughout the deployment cycle.

PTSD: THE FACTS

People who have experienced or witnessed life-threatening events such as natural disasters, serious accidents, terrorist attacks, or violent personal assaults are at higher risk for developing an anxiety disorder such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The symptoms of PTSD may include:

- ◆ Re-experiencing the trauma (thoughts, nightmares, flashbacks of the event)
- ◆ Numbness or avoidance (loss of emotions, feeling detached)
- ◆ Hyperarousal (exaggerated startle response, always on edge)



Symptoms of Anxiety

Unlike PTSD, anxiety is not always associated with a single event. Symptoms of anxiety may include significant, persistent, and uncontrolled worry about a wide range of situations and everyday occurrences. Physical symptoms of anxiety may include muscular tension, chest tightness, increased heart rate, shortness of breath, headaches, difficulty sleeping, irritability, or tension.

When people experience major life transitions or pressures it is normal for people to experience increased anxiety. However, consulting with a therapist or physician is recommended if these symptoms become chronic.

Sadness vs. Depression

Most people will experience sadness or depression at some time in life. Feeling depressed can be a normal reaction to a loss or a difficult life experience. However, when feelings of intense sadness -- including feelings of *helplessness*, *hopelessness*, and *worthlessness* -- last for greater than two weeks or begin to negatively impact your normal daily functioning, you may be experiencing depression versus sadness. Depression is a medical condition that can be treated with the help of a therapist or physician.

Alcohol

Sometimes people consume alcohol to mask uncomfortable feelings such as anxiety or sadness. Below is a brief screener that includes alcohol related questions.

- ◆ 1. Have you felt the need to **Cut down** on your drinking?
- ◆ 2. Do you feel **Annoyed** by people complaining about your drinking?
- ◆ 3. Do you ever feel **Guilty** about your drinking?
- ◆ 4. Do you ever drink an **Eye-opener** in the morning to relieve shakes?
- ◆ If you answered 'yes', to two or more questions, you should consider consulting with a therapist or physician to further explore this topic.

Reintegration: Returning Home

The reintegration process can be challenging after serving in a high stress tour.

Remember to:

- ◆ Be patient with yourself and others
- ◆ Recognize that changes have taken place in you and your family
- ◆ Adapt to the changes
- ◆ Avoid rushing the transition period
- ◆ Use positive communication strategies
- ◆ Allow for stages of change to occur
- ◆ Use the transition as an opportunity to enhance and renew relationships

DO I NEED HELP?

If PTSD symptoms persist or create distress in your social or occupational functioning (fun/ interest in life, work/school or relationships) you should consider seeking help.



WHERE TO GET HELP

Deployment Stress Management Program

Tele: (703) 875-4828 Fax: (703) 875-4952

Email: MEDDSMP@state.gov

<http://www.state.gov/m/med/dsmp/index.htm>

<http://med.m.state.sbu/mhs/dsmp/default.aspx>

Employee Consultation Service (ECS)

Tele: 703-812-2257

Email: MEDECS@state.gov

The Family Liaison Office (M/DGHR/FLO)

Tele: (202) 647-1076 or (800) 440-0397

MHN (resource for DOS employees/families on

Unaccompanied Tour - (800) 213-5811)

Website: <https://members.mhn.com>



DEPLOYMENT STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



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